

THE MILITANT

BOOK REVIEW

Is Socialist Revolution
in the US Possible?

— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 81/NO. 1 JANUARY 2, 2017

Build actions to demand US gov't free Oscar López

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — More than 450 people attended a Dec. 17 concert at the Hostos Community College Center for the Arts and Culture here in the Bronx dedicated to Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera. López has been in jail in the U.S. for more than 35 years for his activities in support of independence for the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico. Many concertgoers were just learning about his frame-up and vindictive treatment by the U.S. government, including more than 12 years in solitary confinement.

The campaign to win the release of López is growing stronger, with more activities planned in the U.S. and Puerto Rico in coming weeks. These actions increase the political cost the U.S. rulers are paying for keeping him in prison.

In less than a month more than 108,000 people signed a petition on the White House website calling on President Barack Obama to release López before leaving office Jan. 20. In an email sent to all the signers Dec. 14, the White House said that while the president has the power to grant clemency, Obama “declines to com-

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Trump selects cabinet in face of liberal hysteria

BY MAGGIE TROWE

As President-elect Donald Trump put together a cabinet that looks a lot like those installed by previous Republican presidents like Dwight D. Eisenhower, a hysterical six-week liberal-left frenzy that dreamed of robbing him of the presidency through an Electoral College coup fell flat. From the pages of the *Washington Post* to the Communist Party's online People's World, editorial writers mislabeled Trump a fascist.

The “Vote Trump Out” campaign aimed at the Electoral College focused on charges that Trump is soft on Russian President Vladimir Putin and that Moscow hackers helped throw the election. Many Republican electors were flooded with letters, some threatening, urging them not to vote for Trump.

Jill Stein, who ran as Green Party candidate for president, acted as a shill for Hillary Clinton and went to court in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, demanding recounts. Perhaps she felt guilty for running in the first place. In Michigan, Stein was credited with 51,463 votes, while Trump won by 10,704. But her merit-

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Calif. vigil denounces cop killing of Francisco Serna

Socialist Workers Party candidate joins protest



Bakersfield Californian/Felix Adamo

Dec. 13 vigil for 73-year-old Francisco Serna, killed the previous day by police in Bakersfield, California. Relatives of Serna and others killed by Bakersfield cops denounced latest shooting.

BY LAURA GARZA

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. — More than 200 people attended a candlelight vigil Dec. 13 for Francisco Serna, 73, shot and killed by the police here the day before. Participants included family; neighbors; relatives of other victims of cop killings in Bakersfield; Dolores Huerta, a founding

member of the United Farm Workers union; and Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles.

“It is difficult to accept that our dad's life ended so brutally, abruptly and with such excessive violence,” said Cyndy Imperial, reading a

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Workers in Syria face catastrophe as Moscow, Assad seize Aleppo



Aleppo Media Center

Crushing of resistance to Assad regime in Aleppo opens new stage in war devastating working people in Syria. Above, residents of eastern Aleppo prepare to be evacuated in mid-December.

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Tens of thousands of civilians and fighters opposing the Syrian dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad are being evacuated from the city of Aleppo. Thousands of Syrian rebels faced a brutal defeat at the hands of Russian airstrikes and ground troops from

Assad's army, Iran and Tehran-backed Shiite militias from Lebanon and Iraq, as Washington and the European imperialist powers stood aside, seeking to pursue their interests without being drawn into a ground war in Syria.

Those leaving the city are the lat-

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1959 Freedom Caravan shows character of Cuban Revolution

Telling the truth is the first duty of every revolutionary. ... How did the Rebel Army win the war? Telling the truth. How did the tyranny lose the war? Deceiving its soldiers.

— Fidel Castro
Havana, Jan. 8, 1959

Capitalist politicians and their big-business media in the U.S. greeted the death of Fidel Castro Nov. 25 with a

pre-scripted message: Cubans would pour into the streets demanding an end to the “dictatorship” there and a return to the dog-eat-dog system of “free market” capitalism.

To the contrary, workers worldwide saw millions of Cuban workers, farmers and youth lining the streets to pay tribute to Fidel as his ashes were carried from Havana to Santiago de Cuba in the east. It was a Freedom Caravan that retraced the route taken by Castro and the July 26 Movement's Rebel

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Capitalism's toll on workers: Life expectancy falls, opiate use grows

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A drop in life expectancy, an explosive rise in addictive drug use and young people increasingly earning less than their parents — these are recent indications of how the world capitalist economic crisis creates social conditions that tear away at the lives of working people.

Average life expectancy in the U.S. fell in 2015 for the first time since 1993, the peak of the AIDS pandemic,

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Minneapolis Teamsters keep up fight against pension cuts

UK rail workers strike against driver-only operations

‘Shrinkflation’: Bosses hide inflation in smaller packages

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In grocery stores across the country workers are finding that things are going down — but it isn’t prices. What the business reporters call “shrinkflation” describes how profit-hungry bosses from Coca-Cola to Chobani are cutting the size of their products while prices stay the same. From candy to cereal, ice cream to tea bags, shrinkage is on.

Companies put smaller size items on the shelves, with new packaging and perhaps a tweak to the recipe. Some industries have gone through multiple bouts of shrinkflation.

A little over a decade ago, Yoplait and Dannon led in slashing yogurt cup size by 25 percent, from 8 to 6 ounces. After a little hit in sales, they rebounded even higher. “Dannon is now pocketing a larger profit on every cup of yogurt it sells,” the *New York Times* marveled.

Dannon also boosted profit by charging more for their Activia brand, claiming its cultures speed up “intestinal transit” and promote regularity. Unfortunately for them, it wasn’t true and they had to fork over \$21 million in a settlement with the Federal Trade Commission for false advertising.

Recently, yogurt bosses have gone for a second bite at the apple, cutting product from 6 to 5.3 ounces. Chobani said they did it to match the shrinkage in Yoplait’s Greek yogurt, as a service to their fans, so they could accurately compare the “nutritionals.” Of course, both yogurts sell at their same old prices.

Other schemes involve companies promoting multipack bags of candy and snacks that appear the same or larger but

include less food inside. Raisin boxes look the same from the front, but got skinnier.

Some company officials argue that shrinkflation is a public-spirited health measure — not so much for their profit margins but to help you keep from getting fatter! One spokesperson for Mars candies told CNBC News that they reduced the size of their Mars and Snickers bars “to bring down their calorie content.”

Particularly irksome to candy lovers was the appearance last month of new Toblerone bars, famous for their pyramids of milk chocolate. They’re now 10 percent smaller with more calorie-free space interspersed between fewer pyramids.

“Britain Panics as Mondelez Cuts the Size of Toblerone,” headlined a Nov. 8 *Fortune* article. While the new shape chopped the chocolate you get, you’ll be relieved to know you’re still getting the same size packaging.

Hershey shrank the weight of its Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups while selling them at the same price. Six-packs of Cadbury’s Creme Eggs have become five-packs.

Shrinkflation “may foreshadow an overall jump in prices,” Bloomberg News notes. Once you’ve grudgingly adjusted to the smaller size, the price creeps up. Oh well, it’s better for you — unless you end up eating two where you used to get by on one.

The government’s method of compiling consumer price index figures minimizes the real impact that rising prices have on workers’ weekly expenses.



During the Clinton administration, the government changed the way they calculated the consumer price index and instantaneously “lowered” inflation. When steak prices go up, for example,

government statisticians assume people will buy hamburger instead. So the lower cost of hamburger meat replaces the price of steak in the CPI, keeping official inflation figures down.

Cop gets jail time for killing of Andrew Thomas in Paradise, Calif.

BY JOEL BRITTON

OROVILLE, Calif. — “Robert Feaster is where he needs to be right now, behind bars,” Brandon Salez told the *Militant* outside judge James Reilley’s courtroom here Dec. 9. The Superior Court judge had just sentenced Feaster, the former Paradise cop convicted of involuntary manslaughter in October for shooting and killing Andrew Thomas in 2015, to 180 days in county jail, three years of probation and a \$10,000 fine.

Reilley rejected arguments by Feaster’s lawyer that he shouldn’t serve any time in jail.

Salez, 29, a childhood friend of Thomas, credited the protests in Paradise last December and January — and protests against cop killings nationally — for Feaster being fired, prosecuted, convicted and sentenced to jail.

Feaster shot Thomas as he climbed out unarmed from a friend’s vehicle, which had rolled over. The car hit the median in the road with Feaster chasing it, seeking a DUI arrest. Thomas died some three weeks later.

Paul Goyette, Feaster’s attorney,

called the shooting “accidental,” and announced he intends to appeal. Goyette lamented the “current environment” created by protests against killings by cops. “If this had happened five years ago,” he said, “Feaster would never have been sent to jail.”

Victoria Rose Woodward, Thomas’ mother, was one of some three dozen supporters present, most wearing a commemorative T-shirt demanding, “Justice for Andrew Nicholas Thomas; May 17, 1989 - Dec. 19, 2015; Accountability for Police Officers.”

“We are changing the course of history, police officers must face consequences for their actions,” Woodward said. “This is a victory in my eyes.”

During the hearing, Edward Thomas, Andrew’s father, urged the judge to impose “the maximum penalty” for “a life taken in a cowardly act of violence.”

Fran Tzugaris, Thomas’ grandmother, told reporters the family had wished for a longer sentence. Five years is the maximum for felony involuntary manslaughter. “But police usually don’t go to jail,” she said.

THE MILITANT

Oppose Washington’s wars, NATO expansion

The ‘Militant’ speaks out against Washington’s imperialist wars, from Iraq to Yugoslavia to Afghanistan and Iraq again. It reports on the provocative expansion of the imperialist NATO alliance up to Russia’s border — begun under Bill Clinton — and the deployment of antiballistic missile systems in Europe and Asia.

Legend:
■ Pre-1999 NATO
■ Post-1999 NATO
□ Non-NATO countries
■ Russia

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The Militant

Vol. 81/No. 1

Closing news date: December 21, 2016

Editor: John Studer

Managing Editor: Naomi Craine

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in December.

Business manager: Lea Sherman

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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Calif. vigil against cop killing

Continued from front page

statement from Serna's family. "We felt our dad was stolen from us at a time our family should be celebrating the holidays, birthdays and making happy family memories. Instead, our dad was murdered by BPD."

Serna was shot after midnight when police arrived after receiving a report that someone in the area was acting strangely and might have a gun. Serna, who family members said suffered from early stages of dementia, often took late-night walks around the neighborhood.

While the cops were interviewing the couple who called them, Police Chief Lyle Martin told the media that Serna came out of his house and walked toward them with one hand in his jacket. The cops started yelling at him and when he kept walking, officer Reagan Selman fired seven times.

Serna was unarmed. He was carrying a wooden crucifix in his pocket.

"He had absolutely nothing. No gun, no knife, no stick, nothing," said neighbor Donald Clark, a witness to the killing.

"BPD murdered my father for no reason," said daughter Laura Serna.

The cops let their dog on him after he was shot, Clark said. "He was begging for help."

Rubia Serna, Francisco's wife, and daughter Laura, asked to go to his side as he lay dying, but police refused.

Among those who joined the vigil were family members of others who were shot and killed by the Bakersfield police, including Jorge Ramirez. His son, also named Jorge Ramirez, was shot and killed by the cops in 2013. Police offered him a deal on outstanding drug charges if he would lead them to another suspect. When he did so a gunfight ensued, and Ramirez, who was unarmed, was shot 10 times. Even though he was assisting the cops, they handcuffed and left him face down on the pavement, and he died.

Ramirez's banner read, "Stand Up and Unite Against Killer Cops."

"We demand charges against the cop who killed Serna," SWP candidate Richter said when he met Jorge Ramirez. "The vigils and protests are important to not let the pressure off the police and the city. And as we participate in these fights, we learn and draw strength from each other."

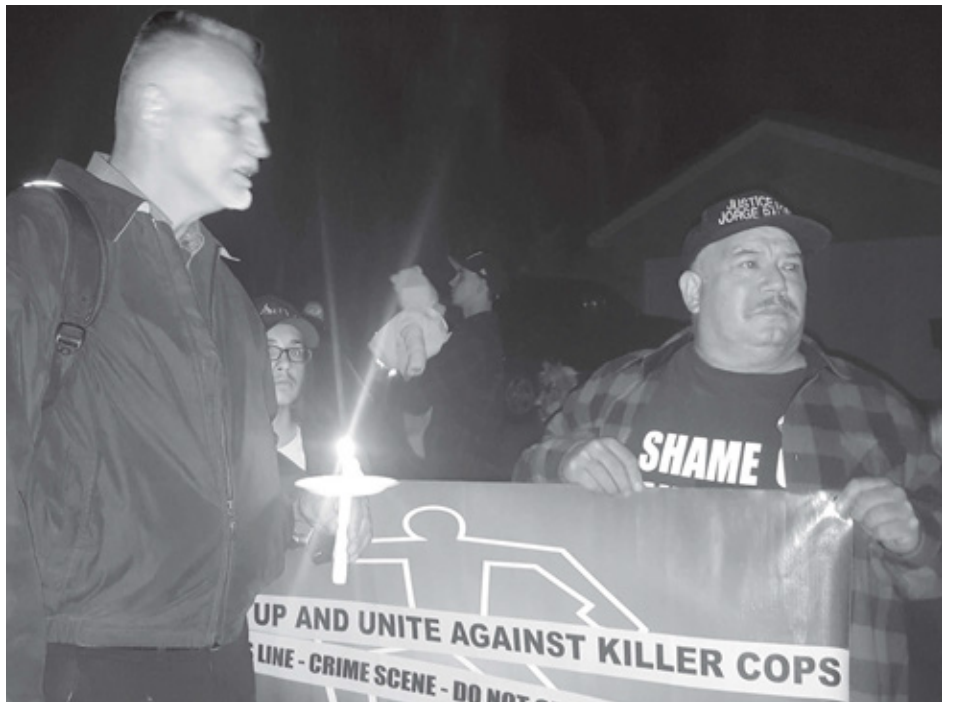
"The cops don't act in our interests, they don't 'serve and protect' us. They serve and protect the interests of the

propertied rulers and act as an occupation force against the working class, disproportionately against those who are African-American, Latino or Native American," Richter said. "That's why this brutality will continue as long as this system remains in place, a system run by and for the capitalist class."

Judy Edens, mother of Jason Alderman, and his aunt, Traci Alderman, also joined the protest. Jason Alderman was shot and killed by officer Chad Garrett in August 2015 when cops said they thought the crowbar he had was a gun.

Garrett is the same cop who killed Jorge Ramirez.

The Sernas are requesting an investigation by the Department of Justice and are asking the California attorney general to appoint an independent investigator in the matter.



Jonathan Batres

Dennis Richter, left, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Los Angeles mayor, with Jorge Ramirez at Dec. 13 vigil in Bakersfield, California, protesting cop killing of Francisco Serna. Ramirez's son, also named Jorge Ramirez, was killed by Bakersfield cops in 2013.

Trump selects cabinet in face of liberal hysteria

Continued from front page

less lawsuits were unceremoniously thrown out.

President Barack Obama took the wind out of the "Block Trump" campaign Dec. 16, defending "the integrity of our election system" and denying ballots weren't fairly counted. Obama pledged to make Trump's transition to the White House as smooth as possible.

Trump won handily Dec. 19. Two Trump electors and five of Clinton's changed their votes.

The howl continues. "Congratulations, Trump. Welcome to hell," headlined an op-ed in the *Washington Post* Dec. 21. It signals continuing Democratic Party efforts to bog down the new administration and prevent it from conducting business.

Hillary Clinton continues to blame her defeat on a Russian conspiracy. "Vladimir Putin himself directed the covert cyber attacks against our electoral system, against our democracy, apparently because he has a personal beef against me," she said Dec. 16.

Moscow, like most capitalist regimes, tries to take advantage of every opportunity to try to influence its rivals. But Washington, with its vast bipartisan history of orchestrating regime change in Cuba, Haiti, Guatemala, Libya, Angola, Iraq, Congo, Indonesia, Vietnam and Iran, to name a few, has no standing to complain.

The anti-working-class record of Bill Clinton's administrations, her conduct

as secretary of state, and her campaign, which oozed contempt for workers, especially those who are Caucasian, were more than enough to torpedo her presidential prospects. Hillary Clinton was one of the most distrusted and unpopular candidates in modern history.

She convinced many workers that Trump was the lesser evil when she called his supporters "deplorables" and "irredeemable."

Union officials and others backing the Democratic Party are attacking Trump's cabinet nominations, accusing him of preparing an unprecedented assault on unions, women's rights, immigrant workers and gays. Many zero in on Trump's nomination of Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson for secretary of state, saying it's a conflict for an executive of a big company to represent the government.

But the appointees of both capitalist parties always represent the interests of the propertied ruling-class families who hold state power. Wealthy banker and investor Joseph Kennedy was just one of many big capitalists in Franklin Roosevelt's cabinet. Ford Motor President Robert McNamara was secretary of defense under John Kennedy. And Eisenhower had a twofer, with brothers John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles, both partners in the international law firm Sullivan & Cromwell, dedicated to defending the interests of U.S. big business throughout the world, as secretary of state and director of the CIA respectively.

Trump will preside over a pro-business administration. Despite Democratic charges that he will provoke a trade war against China, his nomination of Terry Branstad, governor of agricultural powerhouse Iowa and a longtime friend of Chinese President Xi Jinping, to be ambassador to China, points to growing Sino-U.S. trade.

Democrats claim to be the party of peace, labor and "identity politics," a focus on women, gays and other minorities; but their administrations, rife with "brights" and "experts," are responsible for imposing some of the most onerous ceilings on our rights.

The 1973 Roe v. Wade decision brought to an end growing street mobilizations for the right to choose abortion as equal protection for women in making decisions about their bodies. These mobilizations were transforming public sentiment, winning millions to see the

rights of women in a new light.

Instead, the Harvard and Yale-trained Supreme Court justices based a more limited right to abortion on women's doctors' judgments and medical questions like fetal viability. This, coupled with the refusal of pro-Democrat leaders of the National Organization for Women and other groups to mobilize to defend the right to choose — motivated by the desire not to rock the boat and cost Democratic office holders their jobs — opened the way for more than four decades of erosion of abortion rights.

William Clinton led both parties to "end welfare as we know it" in the 1990s, making the future for jobless female workers with children a nightmare as the economic crisis deepened and jobs disappeared.

And Obamacare was designed to block the road to universal health care and to guarantee superprofits for the insurance cartels as health care for working people deteriorates.

Democrats encourage working people, who they fear and view as stupid, to vote for them and rely on their executive action, bureaucratic regulation and court rulings. But defending and extending labor and social gains can only be achieved in struggle in the streets on the road to workers taking state power.

Trump is no more capable of enacting policies to end the crisis of the capitalist economy than was Obama. There *are* no "policies" that can do so. The infrastructure jobs program he talks of "is more about rewarding private-equity investors than about rebuilding America's crumbling infrastructure," wrote Princeton economics professors Alan Blinder and Alan Krueger in the *Wall Street Journal* Dec. 18.

IN THE MAGAZINE 'NEW INTERNATIONAL'



Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

"One of capitalism's infrequent long winters has begun. Accompanied by imperialism's accelerating drive toward war, it's going to be a long, hot winter."

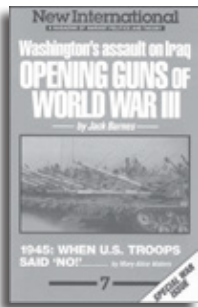
— Jack Barnes, in *New International* no. 12

\$16. Also in Spanish, French, Farsi, Swedish, Greek, Arabic

US Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes, in *New International* no. 11

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Washington's Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III

The 1991 "U.S.-organized carnage against the Iraqi people is among the most monstrous in the history of modern warfare."

— Jack Barnes, in *New International* no. 7

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European votes reflect impact of capitalist crisis on workers

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The Dec. 4 presidential election in Austria and constitutional referendum in Italy both confirm what the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom and Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential race showed. There is growing discussion and anger among working people about the grinding effects of the world-wide capitalist crisis, and no party that wants to win an election can ignore it.

These votes also highlight the impossibility of forging a new extra-national capitalist superpower in Europe, which is what capitalist rulers across the continent have tried to do for decades, pushing an "ever closer union," a stated objective of the European Union.

The competing interests of the ruling capitalist families in each of the European nation-states are pulling the EU apart.

Contrary to the claims of the liberal media on both sides of the Atlantic, the election in Austria shows that what's driving the working class is not xenophobia, but the search for an alternative in the face of today's growing crisis.

Alexander Van der Bellen, a former Green Party leader, won the runoff against Norbert Hofer of the rightist Freedom Party. Van der Bellen said he will be "a pro-European president of Austria open to the world," but insisted, "What I do object to is lifting the old borders." The Greens put themselves forward as an anti-establishment party, opposing "unfair trade deals" and "privatization and corporate power."

The candidates of the Social Democratic Party and conservative Austrian People's Party were routed in the preliminary round, reflecting the impact on workers of rising unemployment and the influx of tens of thousands of refugees. This is the first time in 70 years that neither party will hold the presidency.

The runoff in May was overturned due to irregularities in counting the votes. In the second ballot, Van der Bellen increased his winning margin from 30,000 votes to 300,000. He made the Brexit vote in the U.K. a central theme of his campaign, saying Hofer would lead Austria out of the EU and that voters shouldn't "play with this fire."

Austria depends heavily on export markets in Germany and Italy. But Vienna didn't join the EU until 1994 and supports a single market for trade, not an "ever closer" political or military union. It is not a member of NATO.

The Freedom Party has toned down its opposition to EU membership in face

of opinion polls showing that roughly two-thirds of the population favors remaining.

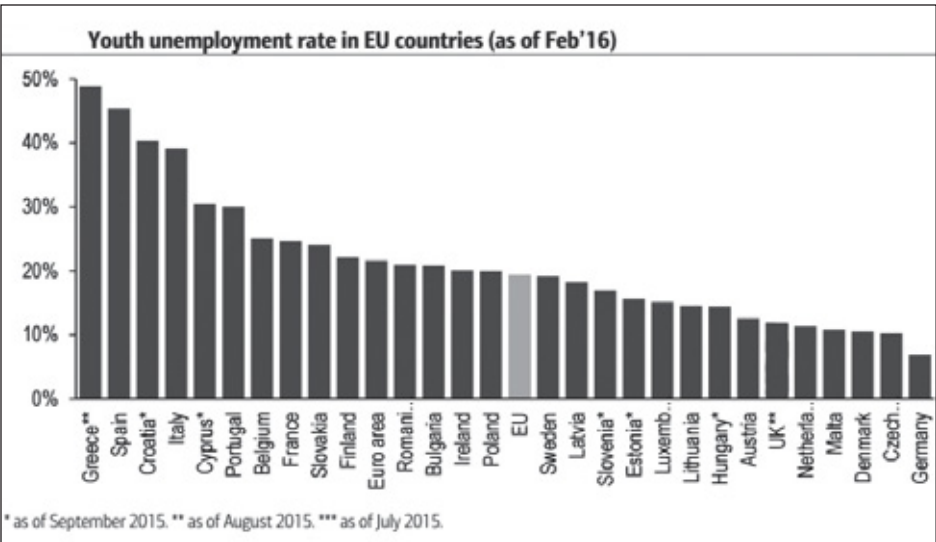
Hofer ran an Austria-first campaign, focusing on defining and defending the Austrian "identity," targeting immigration in general and that of Muslims in particular. "Islam is not part of our values," he told the BBC.

Last year more than 90,000 refugees and other immigrants arrived in the country, which has a population of less than 9 million. This led to a polarized debate that has been at the center of bourgeois politics since. In February the government convened a meeting with officials from nine Balkan states, including six non-EU members, reaching agreement on steps that effectively closed that route into Europe for Middle Eastern refugees.

Italy: No confidence in EU

The referendum in Italy was promoted by Prime Minister Matteo Renzi as a way to deal with the country's growing financial crisis by imposing labor "reforms" pushed by Berlin and Brussels to make Italian capital "more competitive." Working people rejected it in a landslide, a vote of "no confidence" in Renzi's government and the European Union. Renzi was soundly defeated both in the industrial north and the rural south.

Working people in Italy are among those hardest hit by the capitalist slowdown. Since 2008, the country's industrial production has fallen 25 percent. Wages are lower than they were 10 years



Attempt to create extra-national capitalist superpower in Europe has accelerated squeeze by rulers in strongest imperialist powers on working people in the weakest, such as Greece, Italy.

ago and youth unemployment is nearly 40 percent. The country's third largest bank is on the verge of bankruptcy. The EU bureaucracy in Brussels and leaders of the International Monetary Fund fear a banking collapse in Rome would ripple throughout the continent.

Many workers blame the deepening crisis they face on the Italian government's 1999 decision to adopt the euro, removing the Italian rulers' option to devalue Italy's currency to make exports cheaper and more competitive. Many fear they face the fate of workers and farmers in Greece, where the European Central Bank and capitalist rulers in Berlin have demanded deep cuts in wages and social protections as a condition for loans and bailouts to the country's capitalist rulers.

The leading party in the vote "no" campaign, the Five Star Movement, was formed seven years ago by a leftist comedian and an information technology executive. It presents itself as an outsiders' anti-party. Five Star got 25 percent of the vote in the 2013 general election

and has won mayoralty races in Rome and Turin. The Northern League, a rightist party that campaigned against the referendum and advocates leaving the euro, polls some 16 percent.

After losing the referendum, Renzi resigned. National elections are likely soon. General elections are also scheduled in Holland, France and Germany. The economic downturn and the effects of massive migration will be debated in all of these contests.

On Dec. 8, the European Commission proposed that, beginning in March, EU member states should start sending migrants back to Greece, where more than 62,000 people are already stuck in squalid tent camps.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has turned away from welcoming migrants. She hopes shipping out refugees will help her win a fourth term as chancellor. For sure it will further fuel the anti-EU and anti-German political currents in Greece and Italy, the two main entry points for refugees from the Middle East and North Africa.

Attica prison censors 'Militant' for third time

BY SETH GALINSKY

Attica prison officials have impounded the Nov. 21 issue of the *Militant*, violating their own rules, and constitutionally guaranteed rights to freedom of the press and freedom of speech, for the third time in just two months.

The prison's Media Review Committee claims that the image of the cover of the Oct. 3 issue of the *Militant*, which accompanied a Nov. 21 article on the fight against censorship, "could incite violence against prison staff."

The Oct. 3 issue had a front page article on the 1971 Attica prison uprising. The headline reads "Fight Continues 45 Years After Attica Rebels Said, 'We Are Men, Not Beasts.'"

Attica officials also impounded the Oct. 31 issue, pointing to an article reporting on the *Militant's* appeal of the unconstitutional impoundment.

New York State Department of Corrections regulations say that publications should not be banned because of "different political philosophies" or "criticism of Governmental and Departmental authority." The rules say literature may not "incite violence" or "disobedience."

The rules were put in place after a court ruling in 1970 that prisoners do not lose their constitutional protections just because they are behind bars.

The *Militant's* attorney, David Goldstein of the well-known civil liberties law firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman, wrote in his appeals to the impoundments that none of the articles in the *Militant* can be construed as inciting disobedience, much less posing a risk of rebellion. He is pre-

paring to appeal this latest censorship.

Attica officials have also sentenced the subscriber, Jalil Muntaqim (formerly Anthony Bottom), to four months of solitary confinement, twisting and taking out of context comments he made while teaching a class on Black history to fellow inmates.

"I have been suffering intense harassment," Muntaqim wrote in a Dec. 14 letter published on the freejalil.com website. "First messing with my mail, trying to put me in SHU for writing to I Am We Prison Advocacy Network, then denying me receipt of the *Militant* newspaper, now succeeding by taking comments of a 1 and a half hour lecture and cobbling them into a narrative to fit rule violations, removing them from the original context and intent."

Muntaqim is a former member of the Black Panther Party and a founder of the Jericho Movement, which promotes amnesty for political prisoners in the U.S. He has been in solitary confinement in Attica's Special Housing Units since

Dec. 6. Muntaqim has been in jail since he was 19, accused of killing two police officers in 1971, and has repeatedly been denied parole. His supporters have been campaigning to get Gov. Andrew Cuomo to commute his sentence.

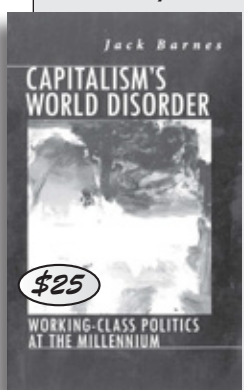
Prison authorities had authorized Muntaqim to teach the Black history class. In his letter, Muntaqim says that in the class he contrasted the Black Panther Party with the Bloods gang, "stating they need to get organized, get away from criminal behavior and tribal warfare. ... I was asked how to make that possible, and I answered they need to get a universal newspaper together that they could collectively contribute to. They interpret this that I was trying to organize them."

A broad range of groups and individuals have issued statements calling on prison authorities to reverse the censorship of the *Militant*. They include American Friends Service Committee; the Gathering for Justice and Justice League NYC; Mothers and Families, New Market, Alabama; National Lawyers Guild; New York Civil Liberties Union; Pen America; Yusef Salaam, one of the Central Park Five; *San Francisco Bay View* monthly; and Heather Ann Thompson, author of *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and Its Legacy*.

"Jalil, like other prisoners, has a constitutional right to read newspapers and other literature, to form his own opinions and to express them without retribution," said *Militant* editor John Studer. "We will keep fighting this until we win and Attica officials give Jalil all the previously impounded issues."

Capitalism's World Disorder

by Jack Barnes



"Conflicts between rival national capitalist classes and governments are blowing apart the myth of a 'united Europe.' At the same time, conditions have improved for workers across Europe to get together."

pathfinderpress.com

Fight prison censorship

Get out the word. Distribute copies of *Militant* articles on this fight.

Get statements of support for the *Militant's* appeal from unions, churches and defenders of workers rights and free speech. Send to: themilitant@mac.com

Send a check to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018, earmarked "Prisoners Rights Fight."

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including strikers at Momentive, California port truckers fighting to be classified as workers, not owners, and United Auto Workers members locked out by Honeywell in Indiana. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

Minnesota Teamsters keep up fight against pension cuts

BURNSVILLE, Minn. — More than 100 Teamster union retirees and supporters from the Twin Cities and southern Minnesota rallied outside U.S. Rep. John Kline's office here Dec. 10 to protest threatened pension cuts. Passing motorists honked support.

The workers were protesting the congressman's latest bill, which would change fixed benefits into "flexible" benefits based on returns on investments that fluctuate with the stock market. Kline was co-author of the Multi-employer Pension Reform Act, passed in 2014. Officials of the Central States Pension Fund have used this law to try to cut pensions of 270,000 union drivers and retirees. After a national Teamsters protest earlier this year the Treasury Department temporarily halted the cuts.

Workers turned out in spite of the fact that Kline's new bill was temporarily halted the day before.

"The battle will continue," retired Teamster truck driver Bob McNattin told the rally. "It has to. It's not just Teamsters who are under attack now, it's all workers."

McNattin helped organize Save Our Pensions-MN, which organized a forum of 350 workers against pension cuts Dec. 3 at Macalester College in St. Paul.

Jim Hiebel, who worked 37 years for YRC Worldwide, told the *Militant* that he was there "so that everybody's benefits wouldn't be taken like they tried to do with us."

"Are we supposed to shut up when the benefits we have earned with our work all these years are cut?" asked Charlene Marchese, another YRC retiree.

Protesters welcomed workers from Roseville who lost their jobs Nov. 20 when Lakeville Motor Express shut the door on nearly 100 Teamsters with no notice and no final paycheck. Those workers now picket two "new" com-

panies, FLE and LME, run by former Lakeville Motor Express executives that serve the same customers.

— Jacquie Henderson

UK rail workers strike against driver-only operations

LONDON — Train drivers here walked out Dec. 13-14 and Dec. 16 in a dispute with Southern Rail that has also seen guards (conductors) walk out several times since April.

The unionists, members of the Associated Society of Locomotive Steam Enginemen and Firemen and the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, oppose Southern Rail's efforts to reduce guards for safety, open the door to job cuts, and impose driver-only-operated trains.

A Southern platform worker at London's Victoria station, who didn't give his name, said he supported the drivers' actions. "A 12-coach train has over



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Retired Teamster Bob McNattin, center, a leader of Save Our Pensions-MN, speaks at Dec. 10 Burnsville, Minnesota, rally, one of series of actions against proposed cuts in workers' pensions.

1,000 passengers," he said. "You need a second person with responsibility for safety." He described a derailment near Watford in September where the driver was trapped in the cab and the guard helped evacuate passengers.

A third of trains, including most commuter trains from key London stations, are now driver-only operated.

Conductors can "step away from the train ... they will have a much wider vision" than drivers, a Southern driver told Sky News. "They can also hear. Our cameras don't have sound. They don't show people running for the train."

Southern Rail failed to get courts to

block the actions, but Transport Minister Christopher Grayling denounced the strikes as politically motivated and "futile." The government has tried to whip up resentment among commuters and recently passed laws imposing greater restrictions on unions' right to strike.

"It's necessary to support the unions when they fight to defend safety, even if that disrupts commuters' access to travel," Sean Winning, a window cleaner in south London, told a member of the Communist League who knocked on his door Dec. 17.

A six-day strike is planned in January.

— Paul Davies

Milwaukee cop charged in killing of Sylville Smith

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

After months of "investigation," former Milwaukee cop Dominique Heaggan-Brown was charged Dec. 15 with first-degree reckless homicide showing "utter disregard for human life" in the shooting death of 23-year-old Sylville Smith in August. Both Smith and Heaggan-Brown are African-American. The killing led to several days of protests in Milwaukee's North Side as demonstrators clashed with cops in riot gear.

Mildred Haynes, Smith's mother, told the media she was glad to hear that Heaggan-Brown will be prosecuted, but thinks the charges should have been

more severe. "He shot him in the arm and shot him again in the chest," she said. "To me, he shot to kill."

Prosecutors say Heaggan-Brown and another officer chased Smith, who had a gun but threw it away over a fence. Heaggan-Brown fired a shot at Smith, hitting him in the arm, and Smith fell to the ground. His weapon was never discharged.

The cop "standing a short distance from Smith with his weapon pointed down at Smith," the complaint says, then "discharges a second shot from his weapon at what appears to be Smith's chest." Smith had his hands up and near

his head. The incident was captured on cop body cameras but the video has not been made public.

The video discredits police claims that Smith pointed a gun at Heaggan-Brown before he was shot down.

If convicted Heaggan-Brown, 24, faces a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison. He has also been held in jail since October on unrelated charges of raping an intoxicated man the day after he shot Smith. Earlier that evening the two had been in a bar watching TV coverage of protests against the killing. Heaggan-Brown has been fired by the Police Department.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 10, 1992

The Philippine government has told the United States to withdraw from the Subic Bay naval base by the end of 1992. The December 27 announcement comes after the breakdown of negotiations on a new treaty.

The administration of U.S. president George Bush expressed disappointment at the decision and said it was seeking alternative military sites in the Pacific.

Subic Bay is the largest U.S. naval base outside the United States. It is home to more than 7,000 GIs and civilian workers. The base is one of several established in the Philippines after the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War in 1898.

The U.S. and Philippine governments reached a tentative agreement in mid-1991 that would have extended the lease to the bases for at least another decade. But this was met with strong opposition by the Filipino people.



January 2, 1967

Washington's bombs did pour down on residential areas in Hanoi Dec. 13 and 14; Washington has bombed residential areas in Hanoi "for some time"; and Washington has bombed civilian populations in north Vietnamese cities consistently since at least as early as June 1965. These conclusions were reached by no less an authority in the capitalist press than *New York Times* assistant managing editor Harrison E. Salisbury, presently visiting Hanoi.

Not only have civilians been targets of U.S. rockets and bombs, according to Salisbury, but the dikes, protecting millions of north Vietnamese from floods, have been bombed in various raids.

Even more devastating [are] the effects of 18 months of bombings on Namdinh, a cotton-and-silk textile town containing nothing of military significance. Its other industries include a rice-processing plant.

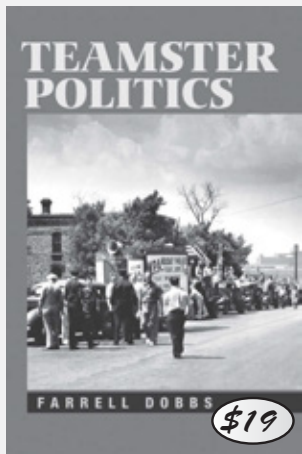


January 3, 1942

Last spring the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company tried to introduce the "incentive" system at its rod and wire plant in Struthers. This is a bonus system aimed at establishing more work for less pay. The workers, members of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, CIO, figured that under this system they would receive as much as eight cents per hour less pay, so they turned it down.

After being forced to bide its time, the company used the beginning of the war, when general anti-strike sentiment rose, to put over its plan.

This was met by a strike, called originally by 200 workers in the electric weld conduit mill. These were joined by 1,600 other workers. The strike ended when the men voted to return to work at the orders of SWOC officials. This is a perfect example of how strikes are and will be provoked by the bosses.



"Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party."

— Farrell Dobbs

pathfinderpress.com

Freedom Caravan in Cuba

Continued from front page

Army after the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista was overthrown on Jan. 1, 1959, but in reverse.

On Dec. 28, 1958, as rebel troops were advancing across the island, Fidel met with Gen. Eulogio Cantillo, head of Batista's joint chief of staffs. Cantillo pledged he would not allow Batista to flee, that he would not organize a military coup to block the insurrection nor ask the U.S. Embassy to "mediate."

But Cantillo lied, allowing Batista and other regime henchmen to escape to the U.S. and the Dominican Republic. Cantillo appointed a new capitalist government on Jan. 1, 1959.

His attempt collapsed, as workers across the country heeded Fidel's call for a general strike and the former regime's troops across the island began laying down their arms. Castro and the Rebel Army began their Freedom Caravan, starting in Santiago de Cuba and stopping in almost every town along the way to Havana to explain the revolution's goals and to increase the consciousness, discipline and involvement of working people.

The *Militant* is reprinting below excerpts from the book *Caravana de la libertad* by Luis Báez and Pedro de la Hoz, which describes the caravan and includes speeches by Castro and interviews with participants. Translation is by the *Militant*.



In this first excerpt Fidel's driver, Alberto Vázquez, describes what happened after Cantillo's betrayal:

Around 2 a.m. on Jan. 1, I began hearing on the radio of the Land Rover the news that the tyrant had fled. ... We were happy, but the Commander in Chief was very upset and he explained to us the significance of what happened. ... I still remember his steadfastness when he called for a general strike, outlining

the final strategy for entering Santiago and proclaimed the slogan: "Revolution, yes! Military coup, no!"



Cantillo called to Radio Rebelde and asked to speak to Fidel.

All of us present agreed that Fidel should answer, speak with Cantillo, discuss the situation that had been created. Fidel looks at us and says ... "I'm not going to speak with things that don't exist, because I'm not crazy. All the power is for the revolution."

— Luis Buch, rebel leader



The aim of the trip was to send a column to support the *compañeros* heading to the capital. I thought I'd get there quickly. And that's when the dictatorship fell. Or rather, when it was overthrown — because it didn't fall, it was overthrown. The dictator and those who wanted to replace him, both of them fell the same day — Batista and Cantillo.

That was the purpose of the trip. I hadn't planned on doing a triumphal march, far from it. It seemed to me a little out of place at the time.

I stopped in the towns because the people stopped me there. I had no choice but to talk with them, even though I thought we needed to be in Havana as soon as possible ... but once we started we had to listen to the wishes of the people. They wanted to talk with us and greet the Moncada combatants.

— Fidel Castro
Santa Clara, Jan. 6, 1959



On Jan. 2 Fidel and the caravan got to Bayamo, where the strongest military garrison that still supported Batista was located, with more than 3,000 soldiers.

It really impressed me because when Fidel stopped speaking to these people, the soldiers began to drop their rifles and



Caravana de la libertad

Fidel Castro waving to crowds as Freedom Caravan enters Santa Clara, Cuba, Jan. 6, 1959. "If people knew how to win, why won't they know how to govern now?" he told mass rally there.

pile them up like they were wood for a charcoal pit. I said to myself: Damn! These were the same ones that were fighting us just a few hours ago. It's because Fidel spoke to them with the strength of his logic and the truth.

— Alberto Vázquez



This was not the time for arms, but for ideas. In war, revolutionaries risk our lives for an ideal. In peace it is crucial to define the arguments, to have clear projections and to explain to the masses the principles and foundations of the society we have to create together.

— Vázquez, describing the message
Fidel gave at each stop



Vázquez also commented on the power of the revolutionary tasks Fidel laid out to the Cuban people. He was in charge of protecting Castro during the caravan, but found himself getting dis-

tracted when Fidel spoke:

When I least expected, I would catch myself absorbed with enthusiasm as I listened to Fidel speaking about future projects, commitments, the things that lay ahead of us.



This can't be a speech to praise the people. ... We have to tell the people what are their obligations. We have to tell them the revolution has to be everyone's work, that's the only way to have a real victory.

— Fidel before his talk in Santa Clara, Jan. 6, 1959

If the people knew how to win this war, which was difficult, why won't they know how to govern now? ... The whole town is here today, because everyone is interested in the problems of Cuba. ... They know that they have to have the final word on all questions. ... We don't need elections all the time, what we

Build actions to demand US gov't free Oscar López

Continued from front page

ment on the specific case addressed in this petition."

López was arrested in 1981 and accused of being a leader of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), which in the mid-1970s took credit for bombing U.S. businesses with investments in Puerto Rico. But U.S. prosecutors had no proof that López was involved in any act of violence. Instead,

their main charge against him was "seditious conspiracy."

In fact, in the 1960s and '70s dozens of violent attacks, including assassinations, were carried out against Puerto Rican *independentistas* and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in Puerto Rico, Miami and other cities by counterrevolutionary groups with the tacit approval of U.S. cop agencies.

In one sign of the widespread support for López's release, Jenniffer González, newly elected resident commissioner of Puerto Rico, the nonvoting representative of Puerto Rico to the U.S. House of Representatives, was one of those who signed the petition. González had previously opposed pardoning López.

González, of the New Progressive Party, which is affiliated to the Republican Party in the U.S., says that she now supports freeing López because his sentence was "disproportionately long and unjust." López, now 73 years old, is serving a 70-year sen-

tence.

López had been offered clemency by President Bill Clinton in 1999 along with more than a dozen other Puerto Rican independence fighters in jail on similar charges. López turned the offer down because two *independentistas*, Carlos Alberto Torres and Haydée Beltrán, were excluded. Torres was released in 2010 and Beltrán in 2009.

Adolfo Matos, one of those pardoned by Clinton, told the *Militant* by phone from Lajas, Puerto Rico, Dec. 17 that "Oscar didn't want anybody left behind."

"It's not thanks to Clinton that we were freed," Matos said. "But because of the pressure of the Puerto Rican people."

John MacElwee, director of the Center for the Arts and Culture, introduced the concert, a celebration of Puerto Rican Flag Day. He was joined on stage by New York state Assemblyman José Rivera, Ana López from the NY Coordinator to Free Oscar López, and several members of 35 Women For Oscar. The concert featured renowned Puerto Rican singer Danny Rivera and Nelson González and his All Star Band.

When the band played the revolutionary version of La Borinqueña,

Puerto Rico's national anthem, the audience stood up. "Wake up from your dream, it's time to fight," they sang in Spanish, many with their fists in the air. "Freedom, freedom!"

Oscar's brother José López was scheduled to speak at the concert but his fight was canceled due to inclement weather.

"The concert was symbolic of the historical ties of Cuban and Puerto Rican solidarity," he said by phone from Chicago Dec. 19. "The Puerto Rican patriots who adopted the flag 121 years ago were also part of the Cuban Revolutionary Party.

"It's important to make this point because Oscar continues to struggle for Puerto Rican independence. Cuba gained its independence but Puerto Rico has not."

Labor unions in Puerto Rico and the U.S. are also an important component of the campaign to win López's freedom. They include the AFL-CIO, Service Employees International Union and many others. Millions of workers in the U.S. from personal experience or through friends and family know how the so-called justice system works and when they hear the facts, want to back the fight.

Upcoming events for Oscar López

NEW YORK — Supporters of López are urging people to call the White House every Friday at (202) 456-1111 to tell Obama to release López.

Call to Action on Puerto Rico held a protest here Dec. 21 demanding freedom for López and denouncing U.S. colonial rule.

On Christmas Day, 35 Women for Oscar are enhancing their monthly protest, adding *bomba y plena* music and inviting supporters to bring their families to Times Square at 4 p.m. They will chant for 35 minutes, one for each year López has been in jail.

On Jan. 6, López's birthday, there will be "Free Oscar López" contingents in Three Kings Day parades in cities across the United States and Puerto Rico. "Many churches in Puerto Rico will dedicate their masses that day to Oscar," his brother said.

A Jan. 11 East Coast action is planned for Washington, D.C.

Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The new edition of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? A Necessary Debate Among Working People* is timely, published as the 2016 U.S. election was coming to a close. Donald Trump won the presidency, startling liberal pundits and the left and deepening the propertied rulers' fear of the working

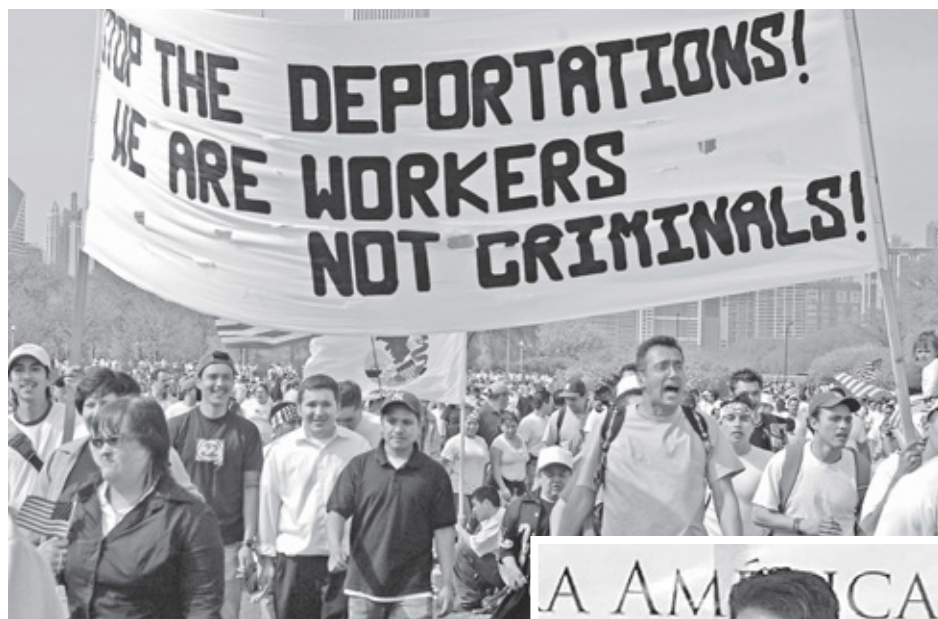
IN REVIEW

class. Hillary Clinton spoke for them when she denounced the workers who backed Trump as “deplorable” and “irredeemable.”

Clinton tried to tell workers the capitalist economy had “come back from the abyss,” and if workers didn’t see it, that was their problem. But “working people know in our bones that for us it’s a lie, a lie borne out by the facts we live with,” Norton Sandler, a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, writes in the preface.

Behind the election results are the millions Clinton wrote off, who face the daily consequences of the ongoing, slow-burning economic contraction and financial crisis of capitalism and the drive of the bosses and their government to place the burden of that social calamity on our backs. The rulers sense that down the road they face a deepening class struggle.

The book is alive with questions critical for working people facing politics today, even though it is based on a debate that took place almost a decade ago. “Only the first tremors of the coming housing-fueled ‘debt crisis’ and subsequent near-collapse of the credit and banking system had been felt” at that



Militant photos: Top, Jorge Lertora; inset: Maggie Trowe “Class battles ahead are inevitable,” says SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters, speaking at November, 2007 debate in Venezuela, inset, but their outcome “depends on us.” Above, May 1, 2007, march in Chicago, part of nationwide actions that day opposing attacks on immigrant workers.

time, Sandler says.

Organizers of a five-day forum that was at the center of the 2007 Venezuela International Book Fair — “The United States: A Possible Revolution” — invited Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press, to open the panel discussion with international participation.

Her answer was an unequivocal “Yes!” Socialist revolution in the U.S. is possible. Most of the other panelists disagreed.

Waters addressed “those who believe, or fear, that US imperialism is too powerful, and that revolution has become at best a utopian dream.”

“To reach that conclusion you would have to believe that there won’t again be

economic, financial, and social crises, or devastating world wars, on the order of those that marked the first half of the twentieth century,” Waters said. “That the ruling families of the imperialist world and their economic wizards have found a way to ‘manage’ capitalism so as to preclude shattering financial crises and breakdowns of production and trade that could lead to something akin to the Great Depression.”

“The evidence is overwhelming,” she said, “that the future we face is the opposite.”

The book also records the debate over the place of the Cuban Revolution as an example for those seeking to overthrow capitalism’s dog-eat-dog brutality today.

“The Cuban Revolution will again be increasingly sought after as new generations of vanguard fighters seek historical experiences from which they can learn not only how to fight but how to fight to win,” Waters said. The lessons of the Russian Revolution and the Communist International under Lenin too will once again be studied.”

Many questions came up in the wide-ranging debate:

Is socialist revolution necessary, or is there a way to make capitalism serve the interests of the working class?

Has the Cuban Revolution been superseded by a “third road” between socialist revolution and capitalist rule as a model for today?

Have there been victorious revolutions in the past history of the U.S. class struggle that show the power and capacity of working people? Was the American war for independence a revolution or a land grab? What about the bloody war to end slavery and the subsequent Radical Reconstruction governments?

What is the significance of the recent historic wave of immigration to the U.S.? Has “white privilege” doomed every movement for social change?

Waters answers those who say revolution can never start in the U.S. because workers here are corrupted by the wealth and consumerism of capitalist society, “idiotized” by the bourgeois media.

Also relevant is how Waters and Sandler, who also participated in the five-day rolling debate, confronted destructive anti-working-class agent-baiting and Jew-hatred that a few times marred the otherwise civil discussion.

The five-day dialogue “was unique in its depth and clarity,” Sandler notes. “Certainly no similar exchange among the different political currents they [the panelists] represented has taken place in living memory.”

This is a book for every worker looking for a way to confront the economic and social nightmare the propertied rulers are imposing on us as their system spawns catastrophe for our class.

As members of the Socialist Workers Party take its books and the *Militant* to working people, building the party, they find *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* an invaluable weapon. They use it alongside *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People*, both by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

“While the class battles ahead of us are inevitable, their outcome is not,” Waters says. “That depends on us.”

Freedom Caravan in Cuba

need are meetings every day. ...

These men [the rebel combatants] have to be educated. What I mean is we have to bring out their extraordinary human qualities, their shining intelligence, the pure feelings each one has in their hearts. Not to swell their heads, not to think that everything is over, but to begin to be better. I tell the rebels that none of us knows anything yet and that we have a lot to learn. And if they did what they did without knowing anything, think how much the homeland can expect when they know more than they do today!

— Fidel at mass rally in Santa Clara



Cuba, Africa & the World: A Tribute to Fidel Castro

Speakers:

Dr. Piero Gleijeses, author of *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*

Heather Benno, ANSWER coalition
Mary-Alice Waters, Socialist Workers Party

Jose Pertierra, Cuban-American lawyer
Jennifer Bryant, Venceremos Brigade
Nefta Freeman, International Committee for Peace, Justice & Dignity
Special address by Miguel Fraga of Embassy of Cuba to the US

Washington, D.C.

Sat., Jan. 7, 3:30 - 6 p.m.

Festival Center, 1640 Columbia Rd. NW
Info: 202-320-6017, gnakalagoke@gmail.com

Speaking of past regime changes in Cuba, Fidel continued:

There were revolutionaries who wanted to live off the revolution, they wanted to live off the title of having been revolutionaries ... they went to the ministries seeking posts, to live like parasites, to charge a price for what they had been at that moment, for a revolution that unfortunately was never brought to fruition. ...

Did we make this revolution thinking that as soon as the tyranny was overthrown we were going to enjoy the perks of power, that every one of us was going to jump on the gravy train, that we were going to live like kings? ... We have to ask these questions because the future destiny of Cuba, of us, of the people depends on examining our conscience.



Referring to the mobilizations that greeted the Rebel Army as it crossed the island, Fidel told the massive crowd that greeted them in Havana Jan. 8 as the Freedom Caravan reached its conclusion:

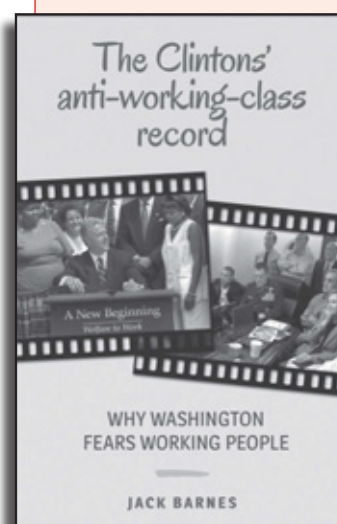
Never in our lives will we be present for such an outpouring, except on another occasion — I am sure that there will again be multitudes — and that is the day that we die. ... As many people will gather as today because we will never let our people down.

And, to the horror of the rulers in Washington, he was right.

For the first time in decades, the US rulers have begun to fear the working class

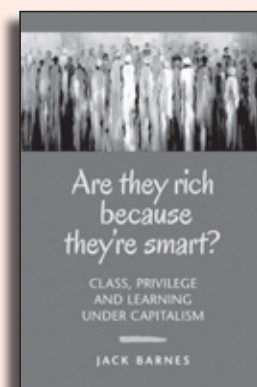
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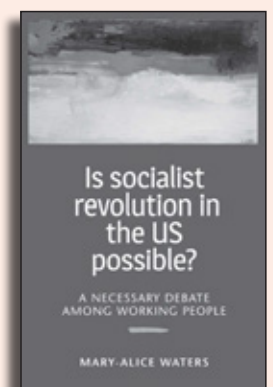


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Also in Spanish, French



Also in Spanish

Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? and Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? \$7 each or \$5 each with a subscription to the Militant.

Class struggle will pose question of power. Who will win?

Below is an excerpt from America's Road to Socialism by James P. Cannon, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. Cannon, a founder of the communist movement in the U.S., was national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party when he gave the five-part series of public forums in Los Angeles in December 1952 and January 1953 that make up the book. Cannon explains that the crisis of capitalism will inevitably lead to giant class battles and the decisive question will be whether the working class has the leadership to take political power. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

The revolutionary party represents the future of the workers' movement in the present. It begins with a theoretical program which foresees the whole line of social development, and assembles its preliminary cadres on that basis. This theoretical understanding and faith in the future deriving from it are the conditions for the existence and dogged perseverance of the revolutionary party in time of stagnation and reaction. But for its rapid expansion into a popular party of the masses, it requires a great surging class struggle. That will come with the next crisis which is already ripening.



Vladimir Lenin, central leader of Bolshevik-led revolution in Russia where working class took power, returns from exile, April 1917. Can working people in U.S. make a revolution? "All they need is the will, the confidence, the consciousness, the leadership — and the party, which believes in revolutionary victory, and prepares for it," said SWP leader James P. Cannon.

The tumultuous developments of the class struggle, under conditions of a developing social crisis, will explode in all directions, in all phases. The various prospective developments on the political and economic fields can be put into separate compartments, and dealt with serially, only for convenience in a lecture. But in real life — this is not a fabricated prognosis, but a deduction from the history of the development of revolutionary crises everywhere in all past times — in real life, when the social crisis strikes, and especially when it deepens, the developments will be simultaneous, interacting on each other in all fields. This is what history tells us.

Under Roosevelt and Truman, the labor leaders' support of the imperialist government has been absolute and unconditional — and given in advance for any kind of crime on the international field. What was that monstrous policy of all the labor fakers based on? It was based on the purely selfish calculation that they, and a section of the American workers, would share in the spoils of world conquest. For that, they were willing to betray the world and all the people in it. They thought America's foreign policy could be like England's foreign policy in the nineteenth century, and yield the same results. By their conquest and enslavement of colonies and subject peoples, England's capitalists became so rich that they could afford, out of the superprofits, to throw a few crumbs to the bureaucracy and aristocracy of labor, and by that they bought

its support. It was the promise and prospect of such a sharing in the spoils that bought the American labor leaders' support of American foreign policy. ...

These labor "statesmen" will not be fit for leadership in the new situation, any more than the old AFL skates were fit for the leadership of the insurgent movement of the workers in the mass production industries in the sit-down strikes of the thirties. There will be no bargaining tables. No government boards to settle things amicably, recognize the union and give the workers a few more cents. That's not going to be the bosses' program at all. They don't want to give a few more cents; they don't want to recognize unions. They want to knock the hell out of the unions, so the workers will have no means of defense against the cutting of wages and living standards. That's what is in the cards. No friendly compromises at the bargaining tables, but only mass battles and mass tests of strength.

The workers, under such conditions, must and will turn to militancy and throw up leaders of a new mold, just as the workers in the thirties threw up new trade-union leaders out of the ranks. And it is in just such a situation, when class collaboration is out the window and the class struggle is on the agenda, that the supreme expression of the class struggle, the revolutionary Marxist party, will get a hearing and become the mentor of the militant new staff of leaders arising out of the shops and the factories.

That's the prospective change on the

side of the working class — a change toward a new militancy, a new leadership, and the revolutionary political party rising in influence and power by virtue of its character and its program. And on the other side, the capitalists must and will discard all temporizing measures, cast off the democratic facade which they can no longer afford, and turn to wholesale violence against the workers. ...

Now who will win? Upon the answer to that question, in my opinion, the fate of mankind will depend. Trotsky once referred to America as "the foundry where the fate of man will be forged." That fate is going to be forged in the social crisis and the coming showdown battle between the workers and fascist capitalists for mastery of this land.

Who will win, in this greatest battle of all time, and of all places? That side, I say, will win which deserves to win. That side will win which has the will to win, and the consciousness that no compromise is possible. Power is on the side of the workers. They are an absolute majority of the population. And their strategic social position in industry multiplies the importance of their numerical majority at least a hundred times. Power is on their side. All they need is will, the confidence, the consciousness, the leadership — and the party which believes in the revolutionary victory, and consciously and deliberately prepares for it in advance by theoretical study and serious organization.

Will the workers find these things when they need them in the showdown, when the struggle for power will be decided? That is the question. We think they will. We think the workers and colonial peoples, in revolution throughout the world, will powerfully influence the American workers by their example. When all the world is in revolution, the American workers will remember their own ancestry and take fire too.

We think the American workers, who have never been Quakers, will demonstrate unexampled energy, courage, and decision when it becomes clear that their own destiny is at stake. We think they will find the consciousness, and therefore with the leadership, for victory in the struggle for power. ...

That's why we belong to the Socialist Workers Party. That's why we're building it up. That's why we're inviting you to join us in the great work of preparation for the great tomorrow.

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Join fight against Attica censorship!

Continuing their assault on freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the humanity of workers behind bars, Attica prison officials impounded the *Militant* for the third time in two months. We urge working people and all who value these rights to join us and step up the fight to overturn this attack.

Efforts by the propertied rulers, their cops, courts and jailers to undermine the rights and dignity of prisoners aim not only to isolate and demoralize those behind bars, but to weaken basic political rights critical to the working class.

Attica censors impounded the Oct. 3 issue, which featured the front-page article, “Fight Continues 45 Years After Attica Rebels Said, ‘We Are Men, Not Beasts.’” They claimed reading the factual history of the 1971 Attica protest “could incite rebellion against government authority.” When the *Militant* appealed this ruling, won messages of support, and wrote about it in the Oct. 31 edition, officials impounded that issue too. Now, they’ve banned the Nov. 21 issue on the absurd grounds that a picture of the front page of the Oct. 3 *Militant* “could incite violence against prison staff.”

We ask readers to join in defending the rights of Jalil Muntaqim — a former Black Panther Party

member, long-time fighter for political rights behind bars and the Attica inmate whose subscription keeps getting seized. Prison officials continually attempt to break Muntaqim’s confidence and spirit by cutting him off from other prisoners and the world, throwing him in solitary, interfering with his mail and harassing him. Write to Anthony J. Bottom, #77A4283, Attica C.F., P.O. Box 149, Attica, NY 14011-0149.

The *Militant* succeeded in beating censorship by prison authorities in Florida last year and in other states over the years. It can be beaten back again.

Every victory helps open the political space for workers behind bars to read, study, share and learn from any book or paper they want, to maintain contact with the world, form their own opinions and express themselves freely. It breaks down barriers between workers fighting boss and government attacks on the streets and those demanding their rights inside the rulers’ prisons.

Help get statements of support for the *Militant*’s fight against censorship. Spread the word about the fight, win support from your union, church congregation and other defenders of political rights, and contribute to the costs of the appeal!

Workers in Syria face growing catastrophe

Continued from front page

est wave in a catastrophe for working people that has left over 400,000 dead and more than half the country’s population driven from their homes.

These events register shifts in relations among some of the main capitalist ruling classes intervening in Syria to advance their competing interests — particularly the growing alliance of the governments of Russia, Turkey and Iran. And they highlight how Washington, for decades the dominant imperialist power in the Middle East, has been increasingly pushed aside.

Since crushing popular protests for democratic rights in 2011, the Assad regime has a well-earned reputation for carrying out bloody reprisals against opponents of his rule.

Assad’s repression led to over five years of civil war. The regime suffered reverses, losing territory — including large parts of Aleppo — and found it increasingly difficult to recruit troops. But Iranian troops, Lebanese-based Hezbollah forces and Moscow air power tipped the balance against the rebellion. Because of Washington’s reluctance to offer any substantial military aid, opposition forces faced massive bombings, artillery attacks and increased ground forces with hand weapons and little else.

Ankara seeks deal with Moscow against Kurds

For years the Turkish government funded and armed many of the groups fighting Assad’s rule. But Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has shifted Ankara’s strategy, dropping efforts to depose Assad in favor of collaboration with Moscow. Ankara’s goal? To win Moscow’s backing for its attacks on Kurdish forces in Syria, Iraq and Turkey.

Turkish-backed groups pulled back from the fight in Aleppo, and instead are fighting alongside Turkish troops in northern Syria against the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG).

The foreign ministers of Russia, Iran and Turkey met in Moscow Dec. 20, “leaving the United States on the sidelines as the countries sought to drive the conflict in ways that serve their interests,” the *New York Times* said. They agreed to broker talks in Kazakhstan to try to reach a broader cease-fire “between the Syrian government and the opposition and to become its guarantor,” said Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Both Moscow and Ankara took pains not to let the meeting be derailed by the assassination in Ankara of Andrei Karlov, Russia’s ambassador to Turkey, the day before by an off-duty cop who shouted, “Allahu akbar” and “Don’t forget Aleppo.” Turkish authorities are seeking to link the gunman to U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, a former Erdogan ally

who Ankara accuses of orchestrating an attempted coup in July. Tens of thousands accused by Erdogan of being agents of Gulen have been fired, jailed and “disappeared” in a brutal crackdown since.

As of Dec. 20, at least 25,000 people had been bused out of eastern Aleppo since the Russian and Turkish governments brokered a cease-fire, with many more waiting to evacuate. Most are being taken to Idlib province, which is controlled by government opponents. The dominant forces there are Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, which was formerly the al-Qaeda-linked Nusra Front, and other Islamist groups. Idlib is “not a popular destination for fighters and civilians from east Aleppo, where nationalist rebel groups predominated,” Reuters said Dec. 15.

Opposition in Idlib: ‘easy prey’ for regime

“Assad and his allies will have corralled much of Syria’s insurgency and its supporters into a small mountainous patch where they will be easy prey,” Faysal Itani of the Atlantic Council wrote in the *Times* Dec. 14.

Some Ankara-backed opposition combatants are being rerouted to join Turkish forces in their “Euphrates Shield” offensive against the YPG’s drive to unify Kurdish-controlled areas north of Aleppo.

The military operation was launched in August, ostensibly against Islamic State but with the open aim of preventing the YPG from extending and connecting regions under its control. Its current objective is to drive Islamic State out of al-Bab, a city 25 miles northeast of Aleppo, before the Kurds can do so.

In 2012, the Barack Obama administration threatened that any evidence Assad was using chemical weapons would cross a “red line” and Washington would intervene. But when the Syrian regime used those weapons against opposition forces in Damascus, killing nearly 1,500 people, including 400 children, the U.S. government didn’t respond. Since then, Washington’s priority in Syria has been the defeat of Islamic State.

President-elect Donald Trump has said he is not interested in increasing Washington’s military intervention, preferring efforts for a deal with Moscow.

Washington is supporting Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces with airstrikes and special operations troops in the current push to retake Raqqa from Islamic State, over the Turkish government’s objections.

At the same time, U.S. officials have made clear they don’t intend to recognize any form of Kurdish sovereignty in Syria. Kurds “should not seek to create autonomous, semi-autonomous zones,” State Department spokesman Mark Toner said.

Life expectancy falls

Continued from front page

the National Center for Health Statistics reported Dec. 8. The center cited rising fatalities from heart disease, stroke, diabetes and drug overdoses — particularly among those middle-aged or younger — to explain the drop to 78.8 years, from 78.9 in 2014.

This follows a study a year earlier that found a sharp rise in mortality rates among middle-aged workers who are Caucasian. “That trend was blamed on what are sometimes called diseases of despair: overdoses, alcoholism and suicide,” noted the *Washington Post*.

Opioid overdoses have reached crisis proportions nationwide, in urban centers and even more so in rural areas. Over 28,000 people died from these drugs in 2014, reported the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than double the total from a decade earlier. Many who become addicted to doctor-prescribed pain killers such as Oxycontin or Demerol then turn to heroin or synthetic opioid drugs such as fentanyl, which is 50 times more powerful than heroin. Heroin-related overdoses have nearly quadrupled over the past decade, and last year outnumbered gun deaths.

In 2015 more than 12,000 people died of overdoses in just 10 states — Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, North Carolina, Kentucky and Ohio — according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Fentanyl-related deaths across those states soared 128 percent from the previous year to nearly 4,000. Nationwide it rose to 9,580 last year.

In Huntington, West Virginia, with a population of 49,000, local health officials say some 12,000 people are hooked on heroin or another opioid. In a state devastated by the layoff of tens of thousands of coal miners, drug overdose deaths are the highest in the nation.

Pharmaceutical companies promoting opioid pain killer drugs as well as small-scale illicit drug labs producing fentanyl and other synthetic narcotics are reaping big profits while addicted workers pay, in growing numbers with their lives.

The spread of these drugs is tied to the fact that eight years into an official economic “recovery,” millions of workers face declining median family income and lack of decent-paying full-time jobs. Today more than 11 percent of men between the ages of 25 and 54 are not part of the workforce, compared to less than 4 percent in the 1950s.

Drug dependent newborns rises in rural areas

Fueled by an increase in opioid use among women, more infants are born drug dependent. This now affects about one out of every 130 babies in rural areas nationwide, according to a Dec. 12 report by JAMA Pediatrics. The condition, known as neonatal abstinence syndrome, where the newborn has to go through drug withdrawal after birth, has skyrocketed in rural areas over the past decade from 1.2 per every 1,000 hospital births to 7.5 per 1,000. In urban areas the rate has risen from 1.4 to 4.8 per 1,000.

Little medical care is being provided to those struggling to deal with drug addiction. Only 20 percent received any treatment in 2014, according to a government survey. At the same time, increased numbers of children are being removed from parental custody and placed with relatives or in foster homes. In Vermont this rose 40 percent between 2013 and 2016, according to the state’s Department for Children and Families. In West Virginia, foster care cases rose 24 percent over the past four years.

Another aspect of the economic crisis is the drop in workers’ income over generations. In the early 1970s, nearly all 30-year-olds earned more, adjusted for inflation, than their parents had at the same age. But today, with real wages for working people stagnant for decades, about half of 30-year-olds earn less than their parents had. This trend continues if you compare 40-year-olds, according to a recent study released by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

As a result, almost 40 percent of those between the ages of 18 and 34 are living with their parents or other family members, the highest percentage since 1940.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.